

Please amend the subject application as follows:

In the Claims:

In compliance with the practice guidelines for making amendments, Applicants present all pending claims with status indicators.

Please cancel claims 1-7 and amend claim 8.

1. to 7. (CANCELLED)

--8. (Currently amended) A method for preventing exit of gas around a shaft in a cavity that extends through an aperture where the bottom of the shaft is under liquid in the cavity, comprising inserting a shaft through a hollow tube of greater diameter than the diameter of said shaft where the bottom of the tube lies beneath the surface of a liquid that is under pressure in the cavity, said liquid entering the hollow tube through the bottom until the pressure outside the tube in the cavity and the weight of the ~~water~~ liquid in the tube are equal. --